



# Special Talk

## The Production of Precarity: Migratory Surveillance and Strategic Resistance in Hong Kong

**Nicole Constable, University of Pittsburgh**

This talk presents a concrete example of how precarity is produced, experienced, and resisted in an Asian context. It provides a critical analysis of the connections between flows of people and capital, national pressures to modernize, and the precarity of women migrant workers, by examining new forms of governmental migratory surveillance. Why and how the new electronic passport system introduced as a pilot project by the Indonesian Consulate in Hong Kong in 2015, that was intended to protect migrant workers, has in practice created greater precarity for them. Justified by government officials in terms of care and control of migrant worker citizens, the e-passport policy reflects the Indonesian state's desire to create "legibility" of its citizenry (James Scott). This talk offers an ethnographic examination of the new passport policy in practice, reveals how "caring policies" entail control, mixed motivations, and often contribute to the increased precarity rather than the protection of migrant workers. It reveals numerous social tensions and cultural misunderstandings concerning the politics and wider contradictions of care and control within the context of precarious migrations, governmentality and Asian flows of bodies and capital. It also illustrates the opportunities

Commentator: Wako Asato, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University

**May 19, 2017 3:30-5:30pm**  
**Medium-sized Conference Room I, Inamori Memorial Building**